

State Definition of A Dropout

Rhode Island's definition of a dropout is the same as that defined by the National Center on Educational Statistics. The following is adapted from one of the NCES publications on Dropout (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/dropout00-01/>).

The definition determines whether an individual is a dropout by his or her enrollment status at the beginning of the school year (the same day used for the enrollment count).

Beginning in 1990, NCES defined a dropout as an individual who

1. was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year (e.g., 1999-2000); and
2. was not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year (e.g., 2000-01); and
3. has not graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved educational program; and
4. does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:
 - transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved educational program (including correctional or health facility programs);
 - temporary absence due to suspension or school-excused illness; or
 - death.

Individuals who complete 1 year of school but fail to enroll at the beginning of the subsequent year ("summer dropouts") are counted as dropouts from the school year and grade in which they fail to enroll. Those who leave secondary education but are enrolled in an adult education program at the beginning of the school year are considered dropouts. However, note that dropout status is determined by a student's status on October 1. Students who receive their GED certificate by October 1 are not counted as dropouts if the state or district recognizes this as an approved program. Although a student whose whereabouts are unknown is considered a dropout, states are not required to count students who leave the United States as dropouts even if there is no information about such students' subsequent enrollment status. A student can be counted as a dropout only once for a single school year but can, if he or she repeatedly drops out and re-enrolls, appear as a dropout in more than 1 year.